



COVID-19 in North Macedonia - Update 58

In **North Macedonia**, from **Feb 26** to **12 June 2020, 22:00pm CEST**, there have been **3,700 confirmed cases** of COVID-19 with **171 deaths**.

[NORTH MACEDONIA COVID-19 EPI SITUATION](#)

[EUROPE](#) and [WEST BALKAN COVID-19 SITUATION](#)

[NORTH MACEDONIA COVID-19 HEALTH RESPONSE](#)

[NORTH MACEDONIA COVID-19 SOCIOECONOMIC IMPACT AND RESPONSE](#)

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The state of emergency was lifted yesterday (12 June), paving way for elections in early July. More than six months into this pandemic, this is not the time for North Macedonia to take its foot off the pedal. The biggest threat now is complacency. WHO continues to urge active surveillance to ensure the virus does not rebound.

Over the last 72 hours – Data as of 12 June 2020 20:00

- **Total tests performed (% positive)** : 1045 (%), 971 (17.9%) and 1019 (12.2%) on Friday, Thursday and Wednesday, respectively.
- **Targeted screening tests (number positive)** : 19 (0)
- **New cases: 461** (163, 174 and 124 new cases registered on each day, respectively)
- **Recovered**: 36 COVID-19 patients
- **Fatalities**: 14 new COVID-19 deaths

Cumulative registered COVID-19 as of 11 June – **3537** (Incidence=170.2/100.000) – [see daily curve](#)

- **Cases among health workers: 349 (9.9% of all cases)** of which 249 (71%) have recovered and one death case is registered.
- **Tests performed**: 40 004 SARS-CoV-2 tests. Daily testing capacity is approx. 1200 tests.
- **Patients recovered**: 1682 COVID-19 patients.
- **Fatalities: 169** COVID-19 fatalities (CFR 4.8%) are registered.
- **Gender distribution**: More men are infected with coronavirus than women (1811 and 1726 respectively) and **66% of all deaths are men**.
- **Comorbidity**: 77% of death cases
- **Age distribution: Median age at infection: 44 years**; largest number of cases is in >60-year: 20.2%; >60-year: 66% of all deaths; but the highest age specific incidence of 236.3 / 100,000 is registered in the age group of 50-59 years (657 patients); 0-9-year: 181 confirmed COVID-19 cases; 10-19-year: 190 confirmed

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NORTH MACEDONIA COVID-19 EPI SITUATION

Figure 1. North Macedonia – Daily confirmed COVID-19 cases and deaths (n=3542) and deaths (n=169) by 12 June 2020

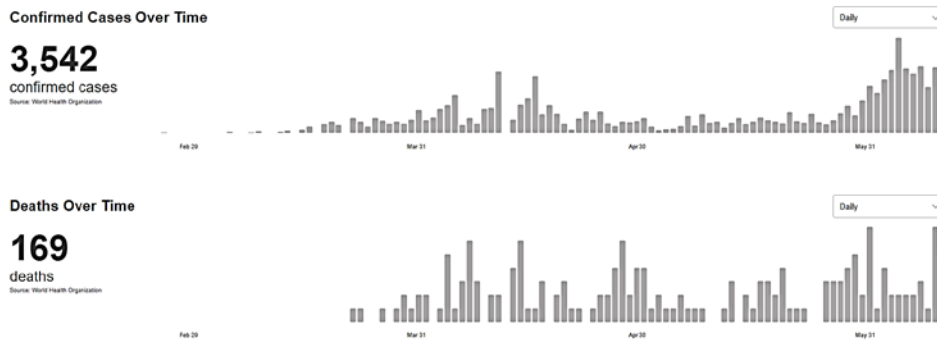
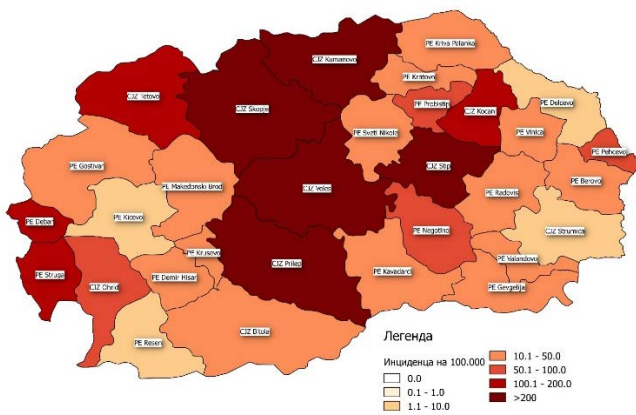


Figure 2. North Macedonia – COVID-19 incidence per 100,000 people, per city, as of 11 June 2020

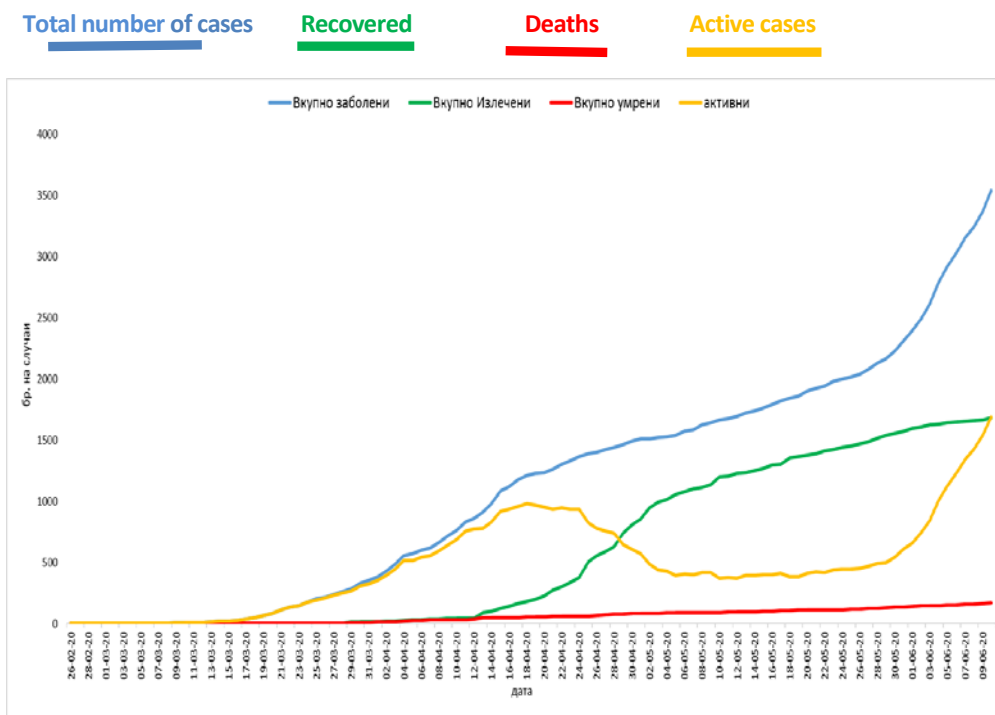


Geographic spread and deaths:
 COVID-19 cases are registered in **32 cities** – first case is registered in Resen. The most affected city is Skopje with 1591 cases (45%).

The **highest cumulative incidence per 100,000 inhabitants is registered in Shtip** (431.0 / 100,000), **Kumanovo** (418.4 / 100,000), **Skopje** (257.6 / 100,000), **Prilep** (232.9 / 100,000) and **Veles** (224.9 / 100,000), while an incident with over 100 patients per 100,000 inhabitants was registered in **Debar, Struga, Tetovo and Kochani**. **83% of all deaths are registered in Skopje, Kumanovo, Tetovo, Struga and Prilep**.

All data can be accessed at www.iph.mk

Figure 3. North Macedonia – COVID-19 statistics as of 11 June (n=3537)



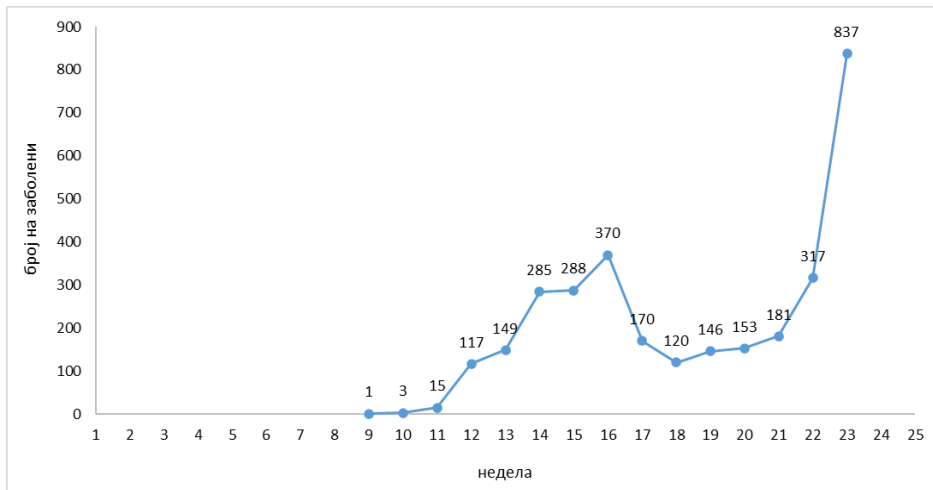
☹️ % Change of 14-day Cumulative Death Incidence is **▲74%**

☹️ % Change of 14-day Cumulative COVID-19 Case Incidence is **▲312%**

☹️ Effective Reproduction Number - **1.3 (1.1 – 1.5)**
 Clusters phase

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Figure 4. Distribution of number of COVID-19 patients in North Macedonia by laboratory confirmation week, 23/2020 (n=3152)



New cases are registered continually since Week 11 in 2020.

The greatest number of cases is registered in Week 23 (n=837).

The greatest number of cases daily is registered on 4 June 2020 (n=180).

EUROPE COVID-19 SITUATION AS OF 12 JUNE 2020 IN LAST 7 DAYS; WWW.COVID19.WHO.INT

World Health Organization
Europe

COVID-19 situation in the WHO European Region
data as of: 12 June 2020, 10:00 (CET)

More information
WHO Global Situation Dashboard
WHO/Europe COVID-19 website

54 Countries (14 days)* Total

Russian Federation	(123,800) -1%	511,423
United Kingdom**	(22,282) -38%	291,409
Turkey	(13,044) -20%	174,023
Sweden	(12,561) 76%	48,288
Belarus	(11,958) -9%	51,816
Ukraine	(6,942) 27%	29,753
Armenia	(6,605) 43%	15,281
France**	(6,490) -16%	155,561
Poland	(5,376) 3%	28,201
Germany	(5,216) -29%	185,674
Spain**	(4,801) -43%	242,707
Italy	(4,410) -49%	236,142
Portugal**	(4,314) 32%	35,910
Azerbaijan	(4,123) 119%	8,882

Sort by 14 day total cases

Total confirmed cases	2,363,007
Total confirmed deaths	186,951
Cases last 7 days:	128,800
Deaths last 7 days:	4,728
Crude cumulative incidence (per 100 000 population)	253.9
Crude cumulative deaths (per 1 000 000 population)	200.9

Cumulative confirmed cases

Confirmed cases by date of report

Globally, **more than 7 million cases of COVID-19 have now been reported, and more than 400,000 deaths.** For the past two weeks >100,000 new cases have been reported each day with 75% of recent cases from 10 countries, mostly in the Americas and South Asia.

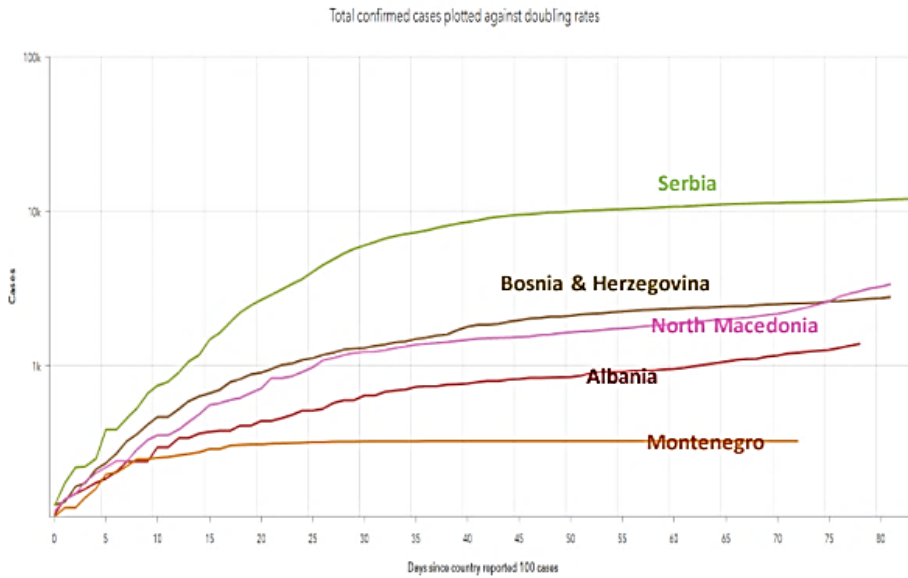
Over the past 7 days:

- Over the past 7 days, cumulative cases across the Region increased **6% to 2,363,007 cases** (from 2,234,207 cases on 5 June) and cumulative deaths increased by **2% to 186,951 deaths** (from 182,223 deaths on 5 June).
- The Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, Turkey, Sweden and Belarus are the 5 countries reporting the highest number of new cases in Europe over the past two weeks
- **17 (of 55) countries have shown an increase in the number of new cases greater than 10% in the past two weeks including:**
 - **>100% - Andorra (2,833% - low incidence), Israel (583%), North Macedonia (312%), Azerbaijan (119%)**

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- **40-99%** - Slovenia (88% - low incidence), Albania (77%), Sweden (76%), Uzbekistan (67%), Bulgaria (56%), Bosnia and Herzegovina (50%), Armenia (43%)
- **<40%-10%** - Republic of Moldova (38%), Greece (34%), Portugal (32%), Ukraine (27%), Estonia (23%), Georgia (21%)

WESTERN BALKAN COUNTRIES COVID-19 SITUATION



COVID-19 began to spread among the Western Balkan countries from late-March to early-April.

A peak of cases was observed in mi- April to mid-May for most countries with the exception of North Macedonia and Albania.

COVID-19 transmission in Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia and Albania has increased, with a >54% increase in the number of new cases in the past two weeks. North Macedonia and Albania have seen the most significant increase in new cases in the past two weeks, following the adjustment of social measures.

The doubling rates across the Western Balkans signals that effective control measures must continue to be implemented particularly in North Macedonia, Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

North Macedonia: North Macedonia has seen a significant increase in new cases since the end of May as the country lifted COVID-19 restrictive measures. 10.2% of cases are among health workers.

Serbia: Over the past two weeks there has been a 23% decrease in the number of new cases; however there has been a marked increase in cases over the past 7 days. Given the increase in other countries in the sub-region, enhanced surveillance and response for any new resurgence of cases will be required. The current effective reproduction number is below 1 (~0.8). **EPI Update (as of 11 June): 12,031 confirmed cases; 251 confirmed deaths; 15 severe cases**

Albania: In Albania the outbreak has been slowly increasing since mid-May. Over the past two weeks there has been a 77% increase in the number of new cases. This follows the continued adjustment of social measures throughout the month of May. The reinstatement of social measures at the subnational level and continued risk communication around individual measures is recommended. **EPI Update (as of 11 June): 1,385 confirmed cases; 34 confirmed deaths**

Montenegro: Overall, indicators suggest that the growth of the outbreak in Montenegro is stable with the **last recorded new case reported on 5 May (37 days ago)**. Continued monitoring and surveillance is recommended as public health measures continue to be lifted and international travel resumes. **EPI Update (as 11 June): 324 confirmed cases; 9 confirmed deaths**

Bosnia and Herzegovina: Overall, indicators suggest that the growth of the outbreak is stable but increasing. Over the past two weeks there has been a 54% increase in the number of new cases. The current effective reproduction number is higher than 1 (~1.1); **EPI Update (as 11 June): 2,776 confirmed cases; 160 confirmed deaths; 79 severe cases; 107 infected health care workers.**

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KEY PUBLIC HEALTH AND SOCIAL MEASURES (PHSM) – Europe Situation Overview as of 10 June 2020

As the local epidemiology of the disease changes, countries are adjusting public health and social measures accordingly.

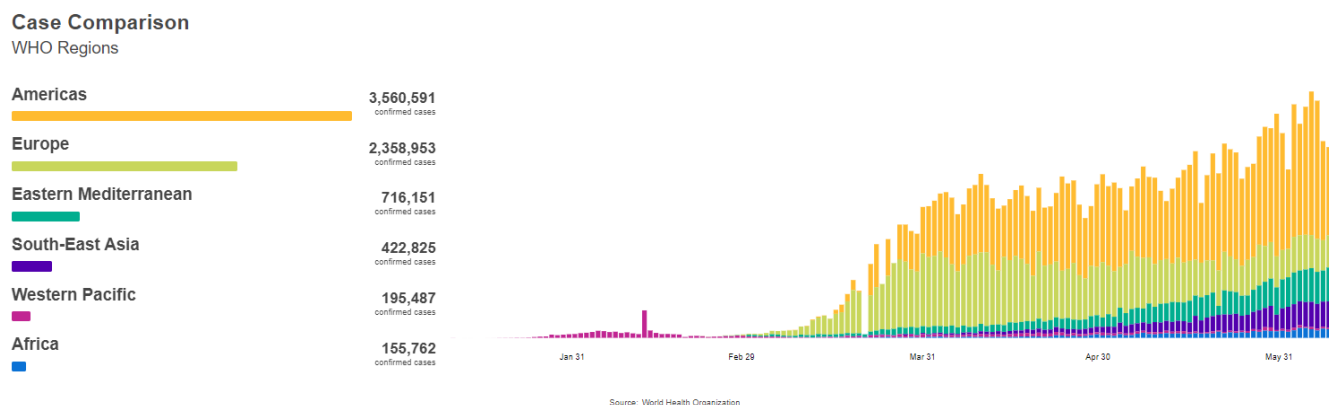
- 11 countries in EURO are now implementing partial or full domestic movement restrictions
- 14 countries are currently in a state of national emergency due to COVID-19
- In 17 countries, the state of emergency has ended/been lifted
- 49 countries have started adjusting some of the national PHSM measures with most countries implementing a phased approach.
- Most common measures that are eased first are the opening of non-essential businesses and relaxation of domestic movement restrictions often followed by school openings and the reopening of cultural sport and/or religious establishments.
- Countries in the Region are increasingly implementing requirements and/or recommendations for the wearing of masks in public, each adopting different approaches
- 11 countries have introduced a mandatory requirement or issued recommendations for the universal wearing of face masks for asymptomatic individuals in public
- 36 countries have introduced similar requirements or recommendations but only applying to certain public settings according to a risk-based approach.
- 54 out of 55 States Parties have implemented international travel measures
- 43 countries are currently implementing a mandatory quarantine for travelers (foreigners and/or citizens) arriving from abroad
- 5 countries have fully lifted mandatory quarantine measures that were previously in place

Indicators for Top 10 Countries and Countries of Interest

Country	Cases	Deaths	Transmission scenario	Effective R	Overall Trend	Cumulative Cases per 100,000 population	14-day Cumulative Cases per 100,000 population	% Change in 14-day Cumulative Incidence
Russian Federation	493657	6358	Clusters	1 (1 – 1.1)	Stable	338.42	84.30	-4.24
United Kingdom	289140	40883	Community	0.9 (0.9 – 1)	Stable	428.16	35.41	-38.31
Spain	241966	27136	Community	0.8 (0.7 – 0.9)	Decreasing	517.72	12.21	-30.66
Italy	235561	34043	Community	0.9 (0.8 – 0.9)	Decreasing	389.03	8.27	-46.37
Germany	184861	8729	Community	0.9 (0.9 – 1)	Stable	221.35	6.58	-31.81
Turkey	172114	4729	Community	1 (0.9 – 1)	Stable	206.30	16.00	-22.78
France	154591	29296	Community	0.9 (0.8 – 1)	Stable	237.36	13.87	69.56
Belarus	50265	282	Community	1 (1 – 1.1)	Stable	531.77	129.13	-0.11
Sweden	45924	4717	Community	1.3 (1.2 – 1.4)	Increasing	457.57	114.42	60.21
Ukraine	28381	833	Community	1.1 (1 – 1.2)	Stable	64.51	14.72	18.14
Poland	27560	1183	Community	1 (0.9 – 1.1)	Stable	72.74	14.48	6.47
Israel	18089	298	Pending	1.4 (1.1 – 1.6)	Increasing	212.33	15.80	561.09
Armenia	14103	227	Community	1.2 (1.1 – 1.3)	Increasing	476.82	213.98	56.04
Kazakhstan	13319	61	Clusters	0.9 (0.9 – 1)	Stable	71.80	21.64	3.29
Azerbaijan	8191	98	Clusters	1.2 (1.1 – 1.3)	Increasing	81.52	37.70	121.50
Tajikistan	4690	48	Pending	0.8 (0.7 – 1)	Stable	50.32	15.28	-43.86
Uzbekistan	4547	18	Clusters	1.1 (1 – 1.3)	Stable	13.79	3.68	65.02
North Macedonia	3242	157	Clusters	1.4 (1.2 – 1.6)	Increasing	155.61	58.89	259.74
Albania	1341	34	Clusters	NA	NA	46.55	11.42	89.07

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Figure 5: Comparison Epi curve of confirmed COVID-19, by date of report and WHO region through 12 June 2020 for all WHO Regions



Situation in numbers (by WHO Region)

Total (new cases in last 24 hours)

Globally	7 410 510 cases (136 572)	418 294 deaths (4 925)
Africa	155 762 cases (5 680)	3 700 deaths (107)
Americas	3 560 591 cases (75 346)	192 944 deaths (3 401)
Eastern Mediterranean	716 151 cases (19 310)	15 947 deaths (366)
Europe	2 358 953 cases (19 808)	186 889 deaths (565)
South-East Asia	422 825 cases (15 411)	11 645 deaths (474)
Western Pacific	195 487 cases (1 017)	7 156 deaths (12)

*Remember to check the European Region Situation Dashboards available in both [ENGLISH](#) and [RUSSIAN](#) for the latest, verified information on the COVID-19 situation in the Region.

**Access a Mobile Friendly Version of the European Region COVID-19 Situation Dashboard [HERE](#)

Refugee and Migrant Health in the context of COVID-19

Figures from the EU show that in April, **asylum applications in Europe fell to the lowest level in over a decade due to closed borders**. The recorded asylum applications in April were 8,730, an 86% drop from 61,421 in February.

- **The Government of Greece** announced the continuation of precautionary measures to stem the spread of coronavirus in reception centres hosting asylum seekers until 21 June.
- **On 8 June, the government in Turkey** started a COVID-19 seroprevalence survey of 150,000 participants. Preliminary information from Ministry officials suggest refugee and migrant populations will be included in the sample.
- **In Turkey**, according to a **survey among 879 refugees** in five provinces by Relief International, **utilization of healthcare decreased from 87% to 25%**, and access to medicines decreased by half during the pandemic period. The main reasons for these changes were reported as financial difficulties, stay at home orders, and fear of infection
- According to ILO, approximately **150,000 - 200,000 seafarers are trapped on board ships around the world** due to COVID-19 measures. ILO has called on immigration, health and maritime officials to recognize the seafarers as essential workers and release them.

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- On 9 June, ILO, IOM, UNICEF, UNODC and UN Women issued the joint op-ed 'End stigma and discrimination against migrant workers and their children during a COVID-19 pandemic.' It highlights that it is the most vulnerable, who do not have social protection coverage nor ready access to health and essential services, that disproportionately bear more severe consequences of the virus.

NORTH MACEDONIA COVID-19 HEALTH RESPONSE – in past 48 hours

Test, Trace and Isolate

- **60-75% of the new cases are from known clusters** – that trend continues in Skopje. However, there are new clusters and unfortunately, I must state that people have failed to comply with the protective measures. Despite the ban, people organize mass gatherings and that is absolutely devoid of logic, says Health Minister.
- The situation in Shtip and Tetovo is stabilizing, while **in Chair where most cases are registered, the epidemiologists are still facing challenges in contact tracing, informed Health Minister.**
- **Army medical teams will help with coronavirus testing** due to the increased workload of the teams that take swabs for testing for coronavirus. The several army teams will be incorporated into the already existing teams of the public health centers that are already on the field and will follow on people who are already in self-isolation.
- In the **7 textile factories in Shtip**, 778 samples are collected, and 126 cases are confirmed, of which 24 people are hospitalized.
- The President of the Doctor's Chamber of Macedonia (DCM) urged doctors who do not believe in coronavirus to put aside their personal beliefs and act upon the recommendations of the World Health Organization and the country's health authorities. DCM has documented that some doctors do not believe in the existence of coronavirus and thus do not send patients for SARS-CoV-2 testing and some doctors have publicly announced on their social media profiles that the COVID-19 does not exist.

Health Workforce

16 health workers in the 8 September Hospital are newly infected with SARS-CoV-2 about 20 people - doctors, nurses and technical staff are in domestic self-isolation on the basis of contact with infected people.

As of Monday, more than 10 doctors and 10 nurses will join the teams of the Infectious Diseases Clinic and the "September 8" hospital as surge capacity for optimal work of these hospitals. At repeated times, the staff of 8 September hospital have been threatened and aggressed by parents of patients or deceased necessitating Police intervention.

Risk Communication and Behavioral insight

A research conducted in the period from 16 to 22 May this year via telephone among 1,000 respondents by the Macedonian Centre for International Cooperation (MCIC) reveals that 88 % of citizens of North Macedonia believe that the country will go through an economic crisis because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Asked which sector they believe is most affected by the pandemic, 27 % of citizens said it is the tourism and catering businesses sector, 23 % said only private businesses while 24 % believe that all sectors are affected. 70% of citizens believe that it is necessary to open the economy to return to work processes.

Regarding the economic measures of the Government, the average grade of the respondents is 2.7 out of 5. 40% of respondents rated government measures with low scores, 1 or 2, and 21% rated them with 4 or 5.

83 % of citizens believe that the COVID-19 pandemic has completely or partially changed their lives, mostly their shopping habits.

More than half of respondents (59%) with 4 or 5 assessed the degree of isolation during the crisis. The survey found that a quarter of respondents postponed medical examinations due to the corona crisis. The survey shows that in terms of negative feelings caused by the crisis, over 70% of respondents rarely or never cried, 48% said they did not feel nervous, 50% did not feel depressed. For the most part of the

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respondents (71%) the family relations did not change due to the corona crisis, and almost every fifth citizen (19%) said that the relations in the family have improved.

The average rating for national news pandemic coverage is 3.4. However, almost half of respondents (48%) said the information was conflicting and confusing. More than half of respondents (55%) said they were not ready to use the "Stop Corona" application, unlike 21% who are fully or somewhat ready for it.

Public Health Measures

- **The state of emergency was lifted yesterday (12 June), paving way for elections in early June. As per the President of the Republic declaration, even without a state of emergency, there were still legal grounds to maintain such preventive measures as curfews, quarantines or crisis situations in parts or in the whole of the country.**
- **Measures are extended to relieve from work the parents of children up to 10 years of age or active fourth grade, chronically ill and pregnant women, single parents, parents of children with disability who use the day care center service, as well as persons who go to work accompanying completely blind people, people in wheelchairs and people with moderate and severe intellectual disabilities, with the possibility, if it is feasible to perform their work assignments from home.**
- The Government adopted the **following protocols**:
 - Protocol for the operation of the auto camps
 - Protocol for acting during the qualifying testing of students who are interested in enrolling in high schools in classes where German is taught with six hours per week fund, in the classes in which bilingual classes are realized and in the class in which the program for International Matura is realized in the High School of the City of Skopje Gymnasium "Josip Broz Tito", in the academic year 2020/2021.
- **2,746 people need to pay over 5 million euros to the budget for violating the measure against protection from COVID-19.** Public Prosecutor's Office (PPO) is proposing 2,746 people to be fined for violating coronavirus protection measures. According to the data of the Public Prosecutor's Office, 2,597 persons did not respect the curfew, 111 citizens did not adhere to self-isolation and 37 natural and legal entities were serving guests as caterers although that was forbidden. These are data on issued criminal orders from all 22 basic prosecutor's offices in the country and refer to the period from March 17 to June 8, 2020. All these citizens are punished according to Article 206 of the Criminal Code, that is, because they did not act in accordance with the health regulations during the epidemic.
- **Increased controls in the catering facilities started yesterday by the State Market Inspectorate (SMI) together with the Financial Police,** which will identify the guests and check whether they respect the protocols for staying in restaurants and coffee bars. According to these protocols, four people can sit at about one table only if they come from the same family and this will be determined by legitimizing the guests; inspectors performed in the past 6 days 3,154 controls, of which 80 percent were checks whether the protocols are respected in the restaurants. 15 buildings received criminal charges, and 20 who did not comply with the protection measures received misdemeanor charges.
- The Commission for Infectious Diseases reviewed and agreed on the submitted plan and protocol of the organizer of the **athletic race of Chronometer to be held on 13.06.2020**, between 06:30-09:30, on the track on the quay of Vardar. The registration of the participants in the race is organized electronically. The organizer provided all the prerequisites for the normal functioning of the race, while all epidemiological recommendations for preventing close respiratory contact between participants will be observed. The protocol includes prevention of close contact between the participants before and after the end of the race ie the start of the participants is organized every 30 seconds, as well as the submission of results will be done electronically.

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Borders and Travel

- The European Commission has recommended the abolition of border controls within the Schengen area by 15 June, **the opening of external borders for the countries of the Western Balkans from 1 July** and the gradual opening of external borders for citizens of other third countries according to their epidemiological situation. European Commission urged members of the Schengen area and associated countries to abolish internal borders controls by 15 June 2020, to extend temporary restrictions on travel to the EU that are not necessary until 30 June, and to prepare a framework for gradual opening. **EC recommended that restrictions on travel to the EU be lifted for citizens of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia from 1 July, as their epidemiological situation is similar or better than the EU.** For other third countries, the Commission does not recommend the general lifting of restrictions as the health situation in some of them is critical. It is therefore proposed that restrictions be lifted for the selected group of countries, and selection should be based on objective principles and criteria, including health status, the ability to introduce measures to combat infection during travel and reciprocity. For citizens of countries for which restrictions remain, the Commission recommended expanding the categories of passengers who can enter the EU, such as students.
- A decision is not yet made for opening the **North Macedonia's border borders with Serbia** although this the Foreign Minister announced that talks will take place to easing the limitations between the two countries resulting from the coronavirus situation. The initial plan was North Macedonia's borders to be opened towards mid-June.
- **Greece to open border crossing with North Macedonia, Turkey and Albania on July 1**, not June 15 as initially announced. Only a few border crossings will be operational, including Evzoni (Bogorodica) to North Macedonia with the exception of necessary official trips, while the border of Greece with Bulgaria will be open. Regarding airlines, flights from North Macedonia and Albania will be allowed between June 15-30, but only for specific purposes not for tourists, and only to the Athens-based airport. As of July 1, all tourists arriving in Greece will have to fill out a form – Passenger Load Factor – including data on their contacts in Greece. COVID-19 tests will be made by random selection, and possible positive cases will be sent to a 14-day hotel quarantine.

Migrants: The police detected 878 illegal migrants over the past nine days, 680 of whom at the Bogorodica border crossing

NORTH MACEDONIA COVID-19 SOCIOECONOMIC IMPACT AND RESPONSE

- The Government to financially support the associations and foundations aimed at young people. The Decree stipulates the criteria and the procedure for financial support for youth projects related to COVID-19 up to 300,000 denars.
- The financial support to individuals who perform independent activity affected by the health and economic crisis is expanded to cover June.
- The Government decided to subsidize social security contributions for media employees. The decision applies to media workers who have worked and reported on the fight against the COVID-19 virus during the state of emergency in June, July and August 2020.
- According to Finance Think, the interventional measures the Government of North Macedonia adopted to assist the economic sector during the COVID-19 pandemic managed to save around 80 % of the job positions that would've been potentially lost. "The measure for subsidization of payment of salaries with 14,500 denars per employee, as well as the measure for 50 % coverage of contributions in sectors most hit by the crisis resulted in saving of up to 80 % of job positions that would've been lost without these measures.

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Having in mind these results, and the development of the healthcare crisis, we suggest the government to prolong the validity of these measures for June 2020 as well, because thanks to these measures, around 75,000 employees whose jobs were at risk of the pandemic managed to remain in their positions. If no measures were implemented, the unemployment rate would've increased to 23.9 %," Finance Think Skopje informs.

- **320,000 citizens to be granted funds from the “Buying Domestic” measure and the measure is estimated at 27.8 million euros. Four categories of citizens are qualified** for the payment card, namely low-income citizens, including social welfare beneficiaries and unemployed job seekers registered by the Employment Agency that earned a net income up to 180,000 denars in 2019 and 60,000 denars up to April 2020. This category includes 115,927 people who are entitled to 9,000 denars. Next up are working low-income people – a total of 117,144, who will receive 3,000 denars. They will also receive a domestic tourism voucher in amount of 6,000 denars as part of the Economy Ministry measure on promoting domestic tourism. Also, young people aged 16-29 – a total of 87,014 – will receive domestic payment cards. Furthermore, 4,394 health workers treating patients with COVID-19 will receive the card. The citizens can use the card to buy Macedonian products and services in restaurants, bars, home delivery, hotels, accommodation facilities, travel agencies, markets, farmers’ markets, pharmacies, hair salons and beauty salons etc. The website www.kupuvamdomasno.gov.mk has been put into function, and the citizens can check whether they have been granted funds from the government from the measures for support of special categories of citizens during the COVID-19 crisis.
- **20 million euros state assistance for companies’ liquidity and investments.** The government adopted a regulation which claims that Private companies that continued to operate during the coronavirus and invest in their growth and development, improvement of competitiveness and modernization of the production process will have 20 million euros at disposal as additional state aid, towards increasing their liquidity and launching new investments. The goal of the new measure is to assist domestic companies in winning back exporting markets, but also to increase their competitiveness, modernize processes, increase productivity, thus contributing to the country’s economic recovery. An investment project launched in March would continue during the post-COVID-19 period, namely July to December. The financial support will amount to 25 percent of the realized investment, in accordance with the investment plan submitted by the applicant, but not exceeding 40,000 euros for companies which profit did not exceed 1 million euros in 2019, up to 100,000 euros companies with a profit between 1 and 10 million euros, up to 140,000 euros for companies with a profit between 10 and 50 million euros, and 200,000 euros for companies with profit exceeding 50 million euros.
- The Government of North Macedonia adopted the **regulation** for implementation of the Law on Communal Taxes during State of Emergency, **which allows payment of compensations to business owners in the tourism and catering sector which suffered losses and damages due to the COVID-19 crisis.** The regulation reduces the expenses for usage of public space in front of the business premises, from 5-15 denars per square metre per day to 1-15 denars. The government also adopted the regulation which predicts 50 % coverage of the costs of hotels and other businesses which will organize conference and events. These events would be organized under current protocols for protection from COVID-19, and the businesses organizing them can receive up to 50 % coverage of the costs, but not more than 30,000 denars. The government also adopted a regulation which provides financial support for performing artists during the COVID-19 crisis. Singers, dancers, instrumentalists and other performing artists will be paid 14,500 denars for the months of April and May 2020.
- The Fund for Innovations and Technological Development (FITD) informs that around 1,000 application packages were so far taken over by companies since the opening of the public call for technological development for fast adaptation to conditions created by the COVID-19 crisis. The initial budget of this project is 200 million denars, and there will be grants of up to 750,000 denars for micro companies, up to 1.5

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million denars for small companies and up to 3 million denars for medium companies, but not more than 70 % of the total value of the investment.

- The Chamber of Accountants (CA) informs that over 65 % of companies are facing difficulties to maintain **liquidity amidst the COVID-19 crisis**.
- **Industrial Producer Price Indices, April 2020:** According to the State Statistical Office data, in April 2020, the Industrial producer prices, total, decreased by 0.1 % at the monthly level and at the annual level by 0.3 %. In April 2020, in comparison with March 2020, the Industrial producer prices, total, decreased in the section Mining and quarrying by 10.2 %, while the prices increased in the section Manufacturing by 0.5 % and in the section Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply by 3.5 %. In April 2020, in comparison with April 2019, the Industrial producer prices, total, decreased in the section Mining and quarrying by 19.9 % and in the section Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply by 5.4 %, while in the section Manufacturing the prices increased by 1.7 %.
- **Industrial Producer Price Indices on Non-Domestic Market, April 2020:** According to the State Statistical Office data, in April 2020, the Industrial producer prices on the non-domestic market decreased by 0.7 % at the monthly level and at the annual level by 0.9 %. In April 2020, in comparison with March 2020, the Industrial producer prices on the non-domestic market decreased in the section Mining and quarrying by 14.7 %, while in the section Manufacturing the prices increased by 0.4 %. In April 2020, in comparison with April 2019, the Industrial producer prices on the non-domestic market decreased in the section Mining and quarrying by 29.6 %, while in the section Manufacturing the prices increased by 1.9 %.
- **Issued Building Permits, April 2020:** According to the data from the State Statistical Office, a total of 173 building permits were issued in April 2020, which was 27.9 % less same than the same month of the previous year. According to the issued building permits, the expected total value of the constructions was 3.6 billion denars, which was 31.1 % less than the same month of the previous year. Of the total number of issued building permits, 92 (53.2 %) are for buildings, 18 (10.4 %) are for civil engineering structures and 63 (36.4 %) are for reconstructions. Of the total of 173 structures, for 93 (53.8 %) the investors are private persons, and for 80 (46.2 %) structures the investors are business entities. In the reference period, 835 dwellings are planned for construction, with total useful floor area of 62,697 m².

SUPPORT TO NORTH MACEDONIA COVID-19 EMERGENCY

- **Company Seavus** donated 20 tons of disinfectants to the MoH.
- So far, EUR 2.5 million have been donated to the **Solidarity Fund donor accounts** of the Government and the Ministry of Health as a solidarity fund to fight the Covid-19 virus. About half a million euros are in the government's account and two million euros in the account of the Ministry of Health. Government officials website with the names of those who donated would soon be prepared for publication.
- The Government is taking measures for the implementation of an already approved loan by the World Bank in the amount of €90 millions despite refusal to sign the loan agreement by the Deputy Minister of Finance, and will do so in consultation with the State Election Committee (SEC) which, according to the Law and Rules of Procedure of the Government, and regarding the appointment and the work of the Interim Government, has the authority to decide about such issues. The assets in the amount of 90 million EUR are dedicated to strengthen the health sector's capacities to fight the COVID-19, acquisition of medical equipment, financing the health insurance for the unemployed and the vulnerable groups, financing the temporary support for the unemployed and securing financial aid for people who were laid off, temporary social aid for households with lower incomes, etc. The Deputy Minister of finance insists that there are no replies about the planned retroactive financing with up to 30% of the total amount of the loan i.e. for 27 million EUR for expenses since 1st of February. She questioned expense of 800.000 EUR out of which, 360.000 EUR are planned for engagement of experts and the remaining to be used for training of medical personnel; the upgrade of the "My Term" system in the amount of 200.000 EUR.

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According to the interim government by the “Przino Model”, SEC is the only independent organ that is appointed and can solve disputes between a minister and an interim deputy minister, in case one of them refuses to sign a document.

HIGHLIGHTS OF WHO NORTH MACEDONIA ACTION IN COVID-19 TIMES

- The second conference for laboratory support in training: sampling and testing principles for the health professionals from the laboratories in the Balkans was held on 11 June 2020.

WHAT IS [NEW]?

DG's Statement – WHO Director-General's opening remarks at the media briefing on COVID-19 – 12 June can be accessed in full [Here](#). **Dr. Tedros'** key messages focused on:

- As the pandemic accelerates in low- and middle-income countries, WHO is especially concerned about its impact on people who already struggle to access health services – often women, children and adolescents.
- Based on the available evidence, WHO's advice is that the benefits of breastfeeding outweigh any potential risks of transmission of COVID-19.
- There is concern about the impact of the pandemic on adolescents and young people. Early evidence suggests people in their teens and 20s are at greater risk of depression and anxiety, online harassment, physical and sexual violence and unintended pregnancies, while their ability to seek the services they need is reduced.
- Guidance has been developed for health facilities and community activities on maintaining essential services, including for women, newborns, children and adolescents.
- Self-care interventions enable more people to obtain the health services they need during the pandemic, when and where they need them.

DG's Statement – WHO Director-General's opening remarks at the media briefing on COVID-19 – 10 June can be accessed in full [Here](#). **Dr. Tedros'** key messages focused on:

- Since early February, it has been said that asymptomatic people can transmit COVID-19, but that more research is needed to establish the extent of asymptomatic transmission.
- Finding, isolating and testing people with symptoms, and tracing and quarantining their contacts, is the most critical way to stop transmission. Many countries have succeeded in suppressing transmission and controlling the virus doing exactly this.
- The DG acknowledged the work of Australia in the legal battle on plain packaging and its support of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control.
- The DG acknowledged the overhauling the intern programme to increase the diversity of our interns and make it possible for more young people from more countries to take an internship at WHO.

Surveillance

- The **COVID-19 surveillance report for the epi week 23** is now published on the WHO Euro website. It is accessible [Here](#) and on the COVID-19 site homepage: weekly surveillance report.

Infection Prevention and Control

- The **Supply & markets working group notes for the record 29 May** are now available [Here](#).
- The **Q&A on Masks** is now available online [Here](#).

Clinical Management

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- A publication highlighting the experience from Spain on **Providing palliative care during the COVID-19 pandemic** is now available [Here](#). Under state of emergency legislation enacted in Spain on 15 March, all private hospitals in the country came under direct control of the government. The Clínica was no exception, and as of 20 May it had seen more than 800 people with COVID-19 in northern Spain and 750 in Madrid. The hospital had to adapt health care service delivery to address the COVID-19 emergency, often at the expense of providing palliative care.
- A rapid advice guidance document on the **Use of chest imaging in COVID-19** was recently published (available [Here](#)). This guide addresses the care pathway from presentation of the patient to a health facility to patient discharge. It considers different levels of disease severity, from asymptomatic individuals to critically ill patients. Accounting for variations in the benefits and harms of chest imaging in different situations, remarks are provided to describe the circumstances under which each recommendation would benefit patients. The guide also includes implementation considerations for different settings, provides suggestions for impact monitoring and evaluation and identifies knowledge gaps meriting further research.
- The guidance on **Medical certification, ICD mortality coding, and reporting mortality associated with COVID-19** was recently updated (available [Here](#)). This technical note describes medical certification of cause of death and classification (International Classification of Diseases [ICD] mortality coding) of deaths related to COVID-19. The primary goal is to identify all deaths due to COVID-19 in all countries, including those not yet following WHO international norms and standards for medical certificates of cause of death and ICD mortality coding.

COVID-19 and Food Safety

- **New** - A UN Policy Brief on **The Impact of COVID-19 on Food Security and Nutrition** was recently published (available [Here](#)). The COVID-19 pandemic is a health and human crisis threatening the food security and nutrition of millions of people around the world. Hundreds of millions of people were already suffering from hunger and malnutrition before the virus hit and, unless immediate action is taken, we could see a global food emergency.

Vulnerable populations

- An ILO and UNICEF recently released a report on **COVID-19 AND CHILD LABOUR: A TIME OF CRISIS, A TIME TO ACT** (available [Here](#)).

Journal Articles

- A journal article on **SARS-CoV-2 infection in farmed minks, the Netherlands, April and May 2020** was recently published and is now available [Here](#).

Learning Resources

New OpenWHO courses are available:

- **New** training course on **Decontamination and sterilization of medical devices-** [Here](#).
- **New** training course on **Standard precautions: Environmental cleaning and disinfection-** [Here](#).
- Training courses are now available in new languages:
 - How to put on and remove personal protective equipment (French and Portuguese) [Here](#) .
 - Standard precautions: Hand hygiene (French and Portuguese) [Here](#).
 - ePROTECT Respiratory Infections (Russian, French, Portuguese etc.) [Here](#).
 - Emerging respiratory viruses, including COVID-19: detection, prevention, response and control methods (German, Russian, French, Portuguese, Turkish etc.) [Here](#).

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Other WHO news

- The **Bi-Weekly WHO/EURO Operational Update on COVID-19** is now available online [Here](#). This report shows a snapshot of the activities being carried out in the WHO EURO Region between 4-17 May 2020.

WEBEX SESSIONS FOR THIS WEEK

Gender webinar on “Addressing GBV in the context of COVID-19 pandemic”, will take place on **15 June** at 12:00-13:30 CET. Access the webinar [Here](#) **Password: 427719**.

The weekly **Laboratory Workshop** will take place on 15 June at 12:00 (noon) CET.
Join Zoom Meeting: <https://who.zoom.us/j/99050096405> Meeting ID: 990 5009 6405 Password: LABWRK20!
Dial by your location: +41 22 591 00 05 Switzerland, +1 720 928 9299 US
Meeting ID: 990 5009 6405
Password: 559451

Neglected Tropical Diseases and COVID-19: A roadmap for recovery

17 June at 14:00 – 16:00 CEST

The World Health Organization (WHO) is kicking off a series of webinars dedicated to neglected tropical diseases (NTDs). Each webinar will focus on a specific theme related to the new upcoming Road Map for Neglected Tropical Diseases 2021-2030.

The first webinar on *Neglected Tropical Diseases and COVID-19: A roadmap for recovery* will be held on Wednesday 17 June. A two-part discussion will look at what essential shifts are needed for post Covid-19 recovery. Panelists include Ministers of Health, WHO leadership, implementing partners, stakeholders and NGOs.

More information [HERE](#)Register online [HERE](#)**Launch of the Global status report on preventing violence against children 2020**

18 June 2020 from 15:00 – 16:30 CET Geneva time

The **Global status report on preventing violence against children 2020** is the first report of its kind focused on violence against children, including child maltreatment, bullying and other types of youth violence, and intimate partner violence.

Developed by WHO, in collaboration with the co-sponsoring agencies noted above, the report explores the progress made in 155 countries in implementing the recommendations of the INSPIRE technical package.

The report provides a baseline against which governments can monitor their progress toward reaching their SDG commitments, and in helping children to stay safe during COVID-19 and beyond.

Register online [HERE](#)**Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) updates**

Virtual press briefings with simultaneous translation in all UN languages planned; with participation of WHO Director-General for Monday, Wednesday and Friday each week. Media advisories with dial-in details will be emailed in advance.

Receive the latest COVID-19 content, guidance and must-know information from WHO. [Sign up](#) for a weekly digital update.